

July 2023 Plant of the Month



Vaccinium stamineum L., Deerberry

July's *Plant of the Month* is native shrub known as deerberry, *Vaccinium stamineum*. Deerberry is a member of the Blueberry family, Ericaceae. It is an upland species, preferring dry, thin woodlands and dry rocky slopes. Hough (1983) indicates the plant is found Statewide with specimens secured from all New Jersey counties except Atlantic and Salem. It is not found in the Pine Barrens. The photo used for this month's edition is from Mantua Township, Gloucester County where the specimen is growing in an abandoned xeric borrow pit.

Deerberry is one of eight *Vaccinium* species native to the state. Two of these species are cranberries, *Vaccinium macrocarpon* and *Vaccinium oxycoccus*. Five the remaining species are blueberries (*Vaccinium angustifolia*, *V. corymbosum*, *V. fuscatum*, *V. pallidum*). Our Plant of the Month differs from the blueberries by having a flower with exerted corolla petals, and a late forming berry lacking desired palatable taste and texture of the true blueberries. The shrub is highly branch and drought tolerant.

Our Plant of the Month has no known medicinal or food uses (Moerman, 1998).

JRA, 7/2023